Hepatitis A and B vaccination

†550. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are launching a nation-wide campaign against Hepatitis A and B;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that there is no arrangement for free vaccination of Hepatitis A and B in CGHS dispensaries and other Government dispensaries;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when Government would make necessary arrangement in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) At present, Hepatitis-A vaccination is not included in the routine immunization programme of Government of India. I.C.M.R. has observed that Hepatitis A virus infection is benign as compared to Hepatitis B, C & E virus infection. The research studies conducted in India have shown that over 90% of children develop natural immunity to Hepatitis A virus infection without taking a vaccine. This immunity develops early, continues life long and is stronger than vaccine induced immunity.

The Government has launched pilot project of Hepatitis-B vaccination in 15 cities during 2002-03 and 32 districts during 2003-04. The main consideration for selecting these locations is coverage of more than 80% eligible children through routine immunization based on coverage evaluation surveys. According to the strategy decided by the Government of India, only children below the age of one year residing in slums of the selected cities and all the infants in selected districts have been offered free Hepatitis B vaccination.

Hepatitis-B vaccine is provided to CGHS beneficiaries on prescription of the Head of Department of any Government Hospital in cases where there is danger of exposure to Hepatitis-B.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi